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SUICIDE SQUAD
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SUICIDE SQUAD
OSTRANDER
YALE
SHERWOOD
CAMPANELLA
KESEL '91
ATOM
SMASHING!

NUMBER THE DEAD

BLACKSNAKE! YOU FOOL! YOU DIDN'T--!

AH SURE DID. AH DONE WHAT AH SWORE TO DO-- WHUT AH WAITED TOO LONG TO DO.

AH JUST KILLED ME RAY PALMER.

JOHN OSTRANDER / KIM YALE • GEOF ISHERWOOD • ROBERT CAMPANELLA • TODD KLEIN • TOM McCRAW • DAN RASPLER • JERRY SIEGEL / JOE SHUSTER • BOB KANE

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YOU FOOL! YOU COULD HAVE TAKEN PALMER ALIVE! YOU KNOW HOW THE CABAL REWARDS FAILURE--AND THEY WILL SEE THIS AS A FAILURE! THEY'LL HAVE YOUR HIDE!
ONLY IF YOU TELL 'EM ABOUT THIG, MR. BAILEY.
AT LAST! AH AM MAH RIGHTFUL SIZE AGAIN! ALL THEM MONTHS OF SCURRYIN' ROUND LIKE A PLEA ARE DONE!
AH'M PURELY SORRY IT'S COME TO THIS MR. BAILEY. YOU, TOO, MISS HUBBARD. BUT WHEN WE WAS RUNNIN' JOBS IN THE CIA, WHAT YOU TAUGHT ME WAS DAMAGE CONTROL.
DON'T LEAVE NOTHIN' BEHIND THAT WOULD CAUSE WORRY LATER. NO EVIDENCE. AN' MOST ESPECIALLY, NO WITNESSES.
NO, BLACKSNAKE! YOU CAN'T--!

BLACKSNAKE, DON'T KILL US! YOU WERE ALWAYS MY MOST TRUSTED AGENT--!

GYAAAAH!
KRUNCHH!
AH AIN'T GOT MY RIGHT HEIGHT BACK JUST TO HAVE TO GO ON THE RUN FROM THE CABAL. SOME-ONE'S GONNA HAVE T'TAKE THE FALL ON THIS, SIR. NOTHIN' PERSONAL.

SORRY, MR. BAILEY! I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE...
OH NO!
WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

AH KILLED PALMER, SWEET. JUST LIKE AH SAID AH'D DO.

PALMER ISN'T DEAD, OLD BUDDY.

WHUT?
YER OUT O'YER PEA-PICKIN' MIND! THAT MAN IS AS DEAD AS THAT DOORNAIL IN HIM!
YEAH, HE IS. BUT HE REALLY WASN'T PALMER, "OLD BUDDY."
I AM.
AND THIS TIME, YOU MURDERING CREEP, I WILL SEE YOU PAY FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

KRAK!
KNOW WHAT? I'M GLAD!! IT GIVES ME ANOTHER CHANCE TO KILL YOU!!!
ONCE WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH!!
ONCE WAS TOO MUCH!
WHAM!
5

IT WAS PEOPLE LIKE YOU WHO KILLED THE WOMAN I LOVED, HER WHOLE RACE, JUST TO GET TO ME!
FOR HER, FOR THEM, FOR THAT YOUNG MAN LYING DEAD OVER THERE, THE DAY OF RECKONING IS HERE!
NO!
FORGET TRYING TO ESCAPE ME LIKE THAT, BLACK-SNAKE! I'VE BEEN PULLING THESE SWITCHES FOR A LONG TIME!
THERE IS NOWHERE YOU CAN GO THAT I CAN'T FOLLOW!
FOR ALL THE BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS, THIS TIME YOU'RE GOING TO PAY!
ELSEWHERE:
IT'S GOING WRONG. I KNOW IT. WE SHOULD HAVE HEARD BY NOW.
WHEN DOESN'T IT GO WRONG WITH YOUR SQUAD, WALLER?

WHEN WE DON'T GET MIXED UP WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU, STEEL.
LOOK AT YOU, CARMICHAEL. GOT A PHONE LINE PLUGGED INTO THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD! IT MAKES ME SICK JUST LOOKIN' AT YOU! HOW COULD YOU HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT DONE TO YOURSELF?
FOR FUN. NO DISTRACTIONS, PLEASE.

DON'T KNOW WHY I LET YOU TALK ME INTO DOING WORK FOR YOU ANYWAY, STEEL.
BECAUSE YOU WERE ENJOYING IT. BECAUSE I HAD NO OTHER CHOICE!
ALL I KNEW ABOUT THIS CABAL WAS THAT IT WAS DRAWN FROM MANY SOURCES IN THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT IT WAS UP TO SOMETHING ILLEGAL! I COULDN'T TRUST ANYONE IN-HOUSE FOR MY INVESTIGATION. I HAD TO GO OUTSIDE--TO YOU!

THEY'RE TRYING TO ESTABLISH GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL OVER META-HUMANS THAT'S WHY THEY WERE AFTER RAY PALMER--TO PUMP HIM FOR WHAT HE KNOWS.
THEY MADE ILLEGAL DEALS WITH QURAC, GIVING THEM INFORMATION ON THE METAGENE THAT LET MARLO CREATE THE JIHAD HIS TERRORIST GROUP.
WE HAD TO KIDNAP MARLO BEFORE THE CABAL OR SOMEBODY ELSE COULD GET HIM--OR KILL HIM. SO WE COULD FIND OUT WHO HIS CONTACT WITH THE CABAL WAS.

FINE. WE KNOW THAT. MAJOR MCCLELLAN, WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE AT THE SAME BASE WHERE MARLO WAS BEING HELD. WHERE SUPERMAN, BATMAN, AQUAMAN, ISRAELI META-HUMAN AGENTS AND WHAT'S LEFT OF THE JIHAD ALL HAPPEN TO BE GATHERED.
AND MY SQUAD HAS TO GO IN, TRY TO FIND THIS MCCLELLAN, AND SNEAK BACK OUT WITH HIM AGAIN BEFORE THE CABAL SNUFFS HIM, SINCE BY NOW THEY ALSO KNOW WE'RE AFTER HIM! OH, YOU GET US ALL THE DANDY JOBS, STEEL! UH HUH!

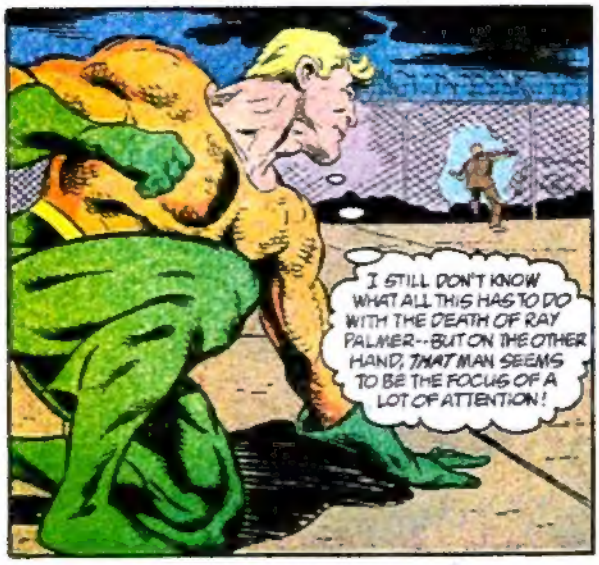
THAT'S WHY THE SQUAD GETS PAID THE BIG BUCKS, WALLER. TO DO THE ROUGH, NASTY JOBS.
WHUPS! I'M PICKING UP SOME MESSAGE TRAFFIC FROM THE BASE ON BLOOD ISLAND!

"UH... IT SOUNDS LIKE THE SQUAD HAS RUN INTO A TAD OF TROUBLE."

OHHHH! I KNOW OF YOU! YURR TH' MAN O' STEEL, ARE YOU NOT? WHAT'S IT YOU MOST FEAR, I'M WONDERING?
OH, T'IS LOSING CONTROL O' YURR POWERS, IS IT? WELL, YOU JUST HAVE!

NO!

EXCELLENT! YOU ALL MAKE A SPLENDID DIVERSION! WHILE YOU BEAT UP EACH OTHER, I GET TO SLIP AWAY!
I'LL TAKE THE FREIGHTER THAT WAS GOING TO TAKE MARLO OFF, GIVE THEM A SONG AND DANCE, AND MAKE MYSELF SCARCE. I'VE GOT MY MILLIONS I'VE SKIMMED OFF IN MY SECRET ACCOUNT...
...EVEN THE CABAL WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND ME!


I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT ALL THIS HAS TO DO WITH THE DEATH OF RAY PALMER--BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT MAN SEEMS TO BE THE FOCUS OF A LOT OF ATTENTION!

WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU'RE NOT LEAVING HERE UNTIL I GET SOME ANSWERS!

LOOK, BATMAN. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN BEATING YOU UP AGAIN. CAN'T AFFORD THE TIME RIGHT NOW. SOMEONE'S GETTING AWAY WHO'S THE KEY TO THIS WHOLE THING
LET US DEAL WITH HIM AND THEN WE'LL TALK
FWAM!
SORRY NOT THIS TIME
WALLER'S INDICATED IN RAY PALMER'S DEATH. I WARNED HER THAT I'D CLOSE HER DOWN SOMEDAY IF I FELT I HAD TO. TALK NOW CONVINCE ME TO DO OTHERWISE
FORGET IT! THERE'S NO TIME AND I DON'T FEEL LIKE ARGUING!
KRAK!

YOU'RE ANGRY, TURNER. SLOPPY. I EXPECTED BETTER FROM YOU.

MISTER, YOU AIN'T SEEN MAD YET!!

BRAH! BRAP!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BAKOW SPAK!

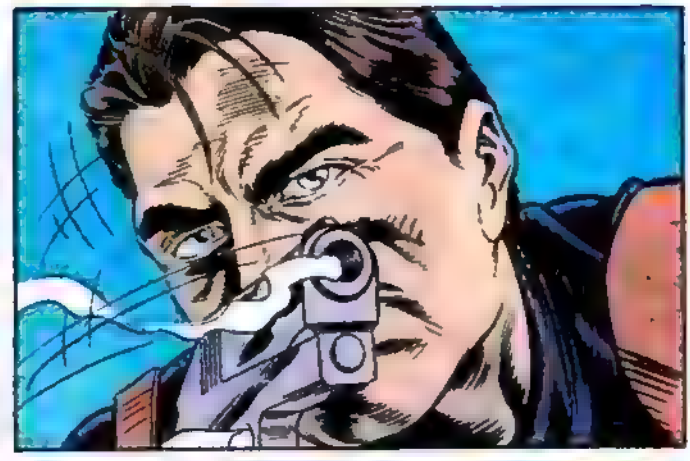
YOU CALL THAT SHOOTING?

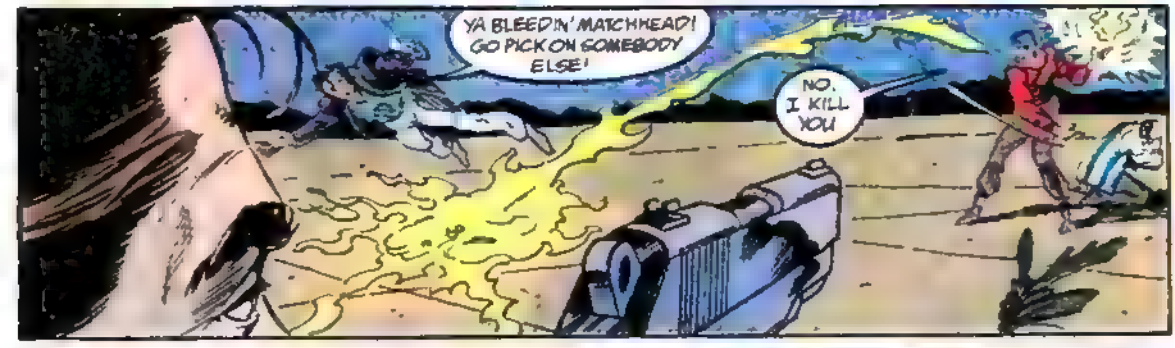
BLAM BLAM

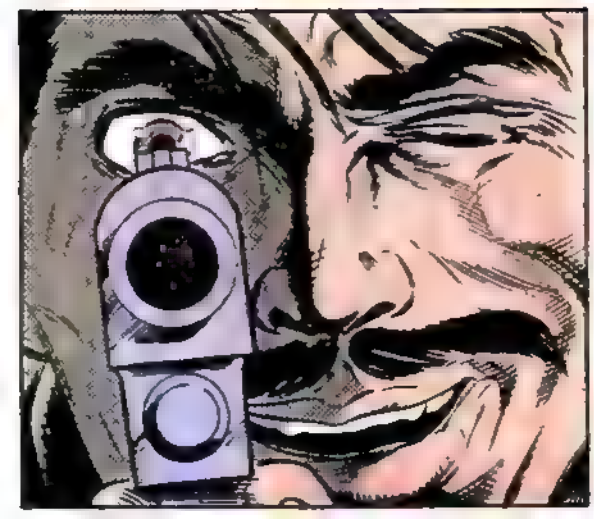
BLAM

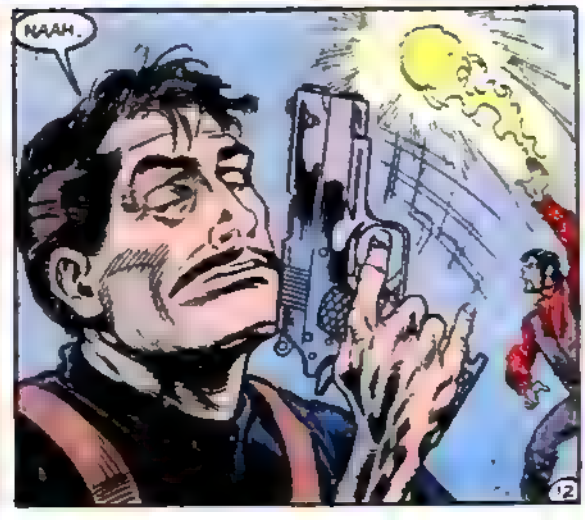
CLAK

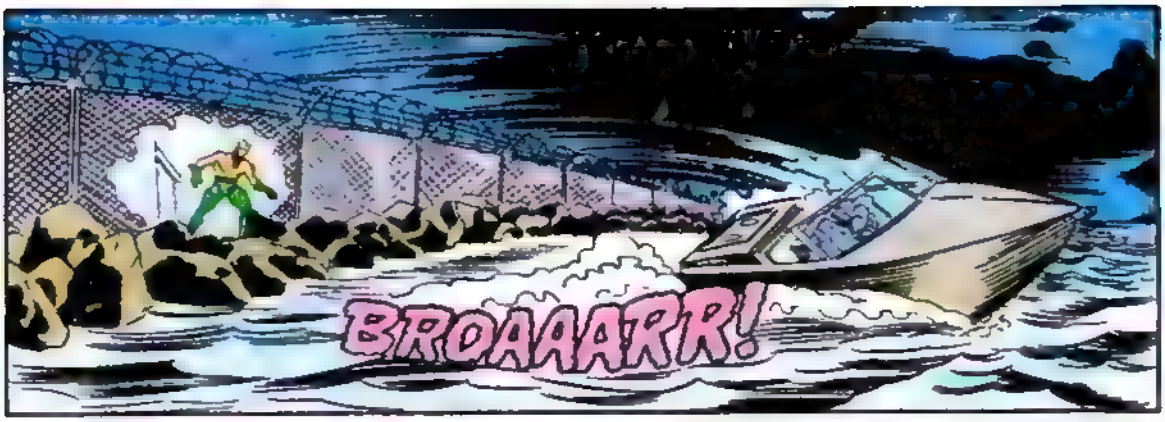
BLAM!

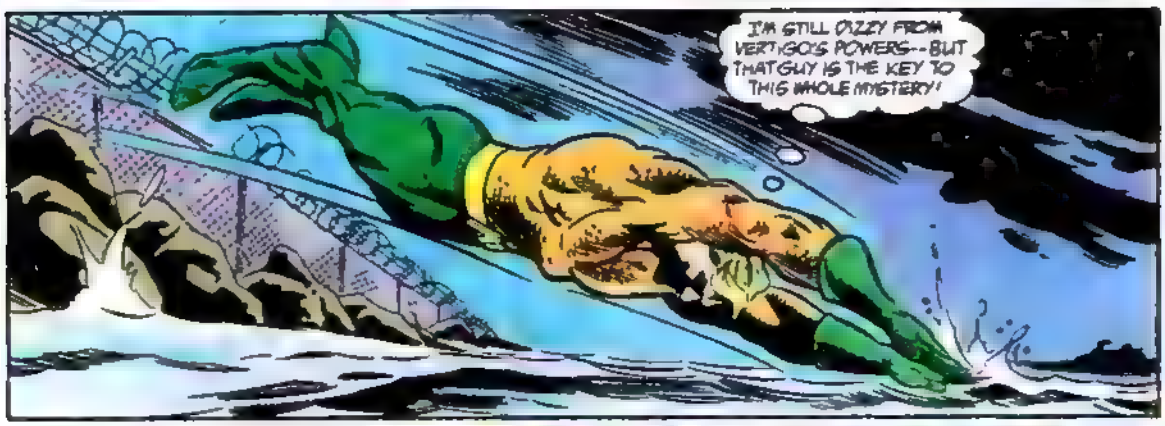


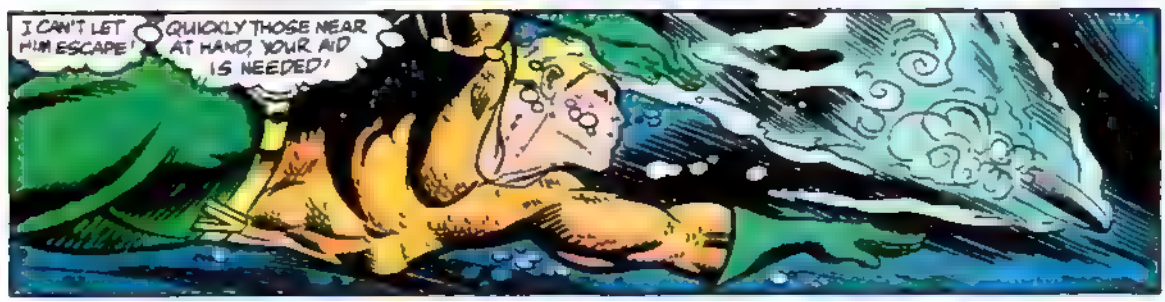

YA BLEEDIN' MATCHHEAD! GO PICK ON SOMEBODY ELSE!
NO. I KILL YOU



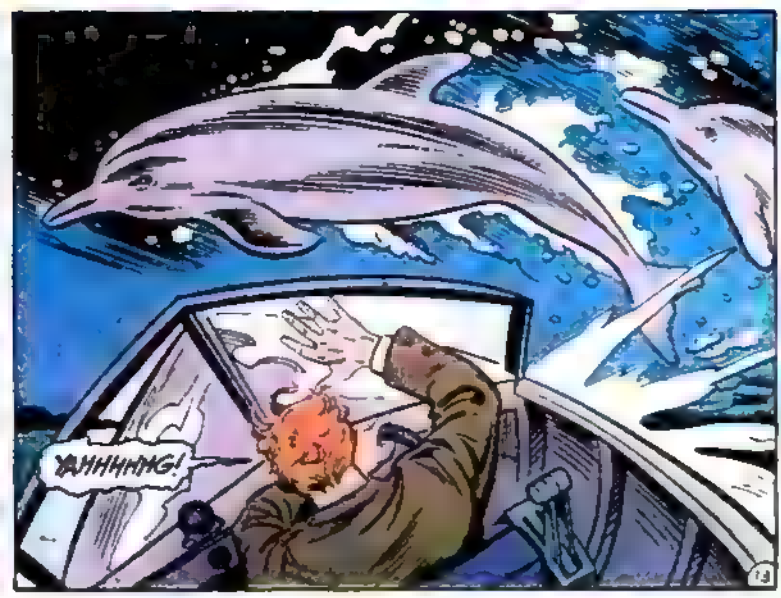

NAAH.


BROAAARR!


I'M STILL DIZZY FROM VERTIGO'S POWERS--BUT THAT GUY IS THE KEY TO THIS WHOLE MYSTERY!


I CAN'T LET HIM ESCAPE!
QUICKLY THOSE NEAR AT HAND, YOUR AID IS NEEDED!

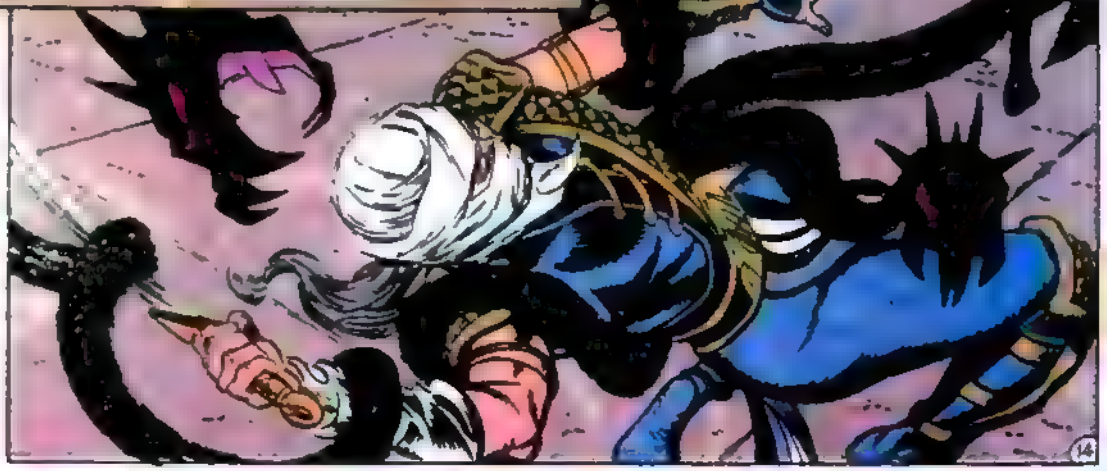
YES! YES! THERE'S NO FLIES ON YOU, GEORGE A. McCLELLAN! WE'RE CLEAN AWAY!


YAHHHHHG!

SNEKT!
WHIIT!

WHOK!

I HEARD ABOUT YOU FROM BEN. YOU'RE JUDITH--SOMETHING OF A NINJA, A SHADOW-WARRIOR.


WELL, I AM THE SHADOWS. CAN YOU FIGHT ME?

ELSEWHERE

YOU AIN'T GONNA KILL ME, PALMER! AH KNOWS YOU HERO-TYPES! AGAINST YER CODES, AIN'T IT?

I HAVE KILLED, BLACKSNAKE--WHEN I WAS PART OF LAETHWEN'S SOCIETY. BUT I DON'T LOOK FOR MORE PEOPLE TO KILL. I'M TIRED OF KILLING--OF DEATH.

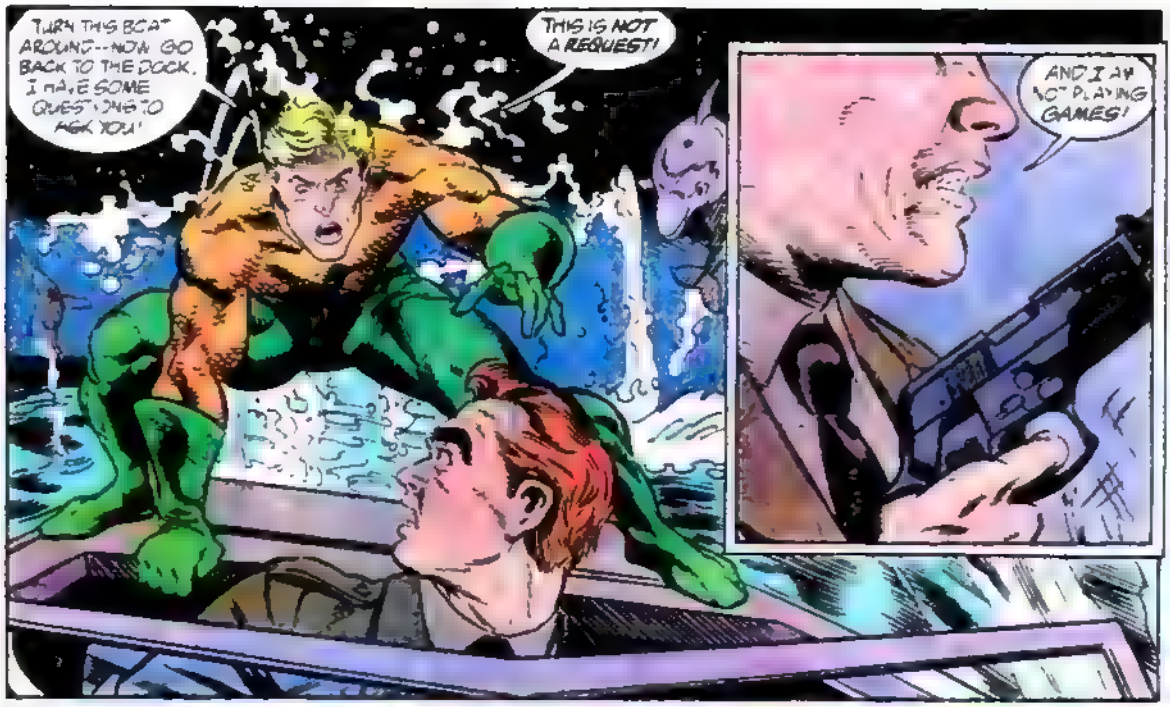
AND THERE ARE OTHER WAYS OF DEALING WITH YOU.

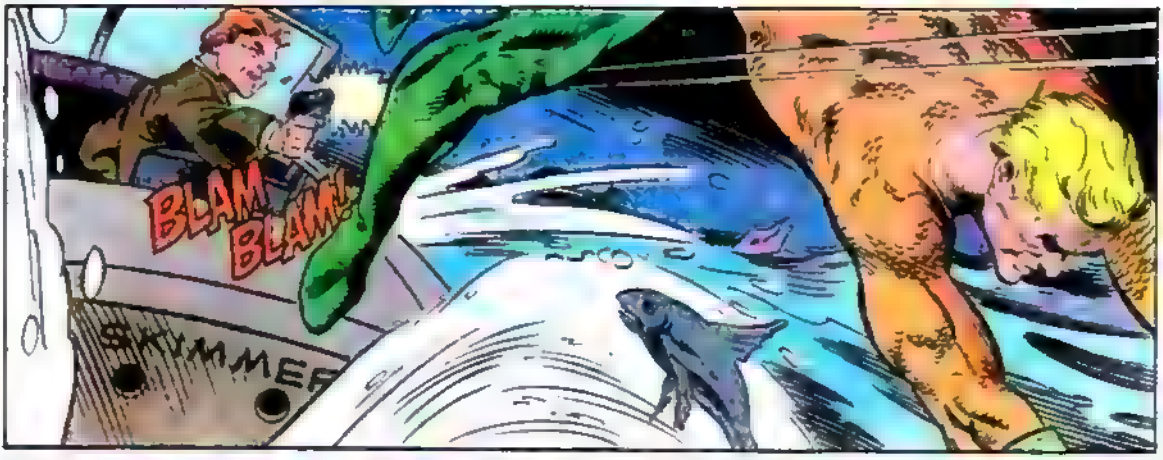
RRRUMP!

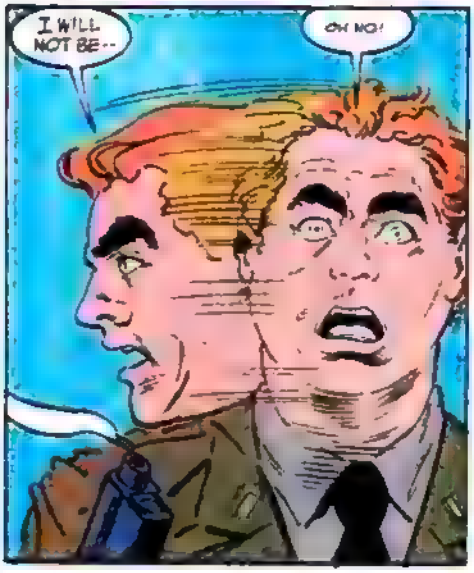
NO! YUH JUST CAN'T STRAND ME HERE, PALMER! AH'LL DIE!

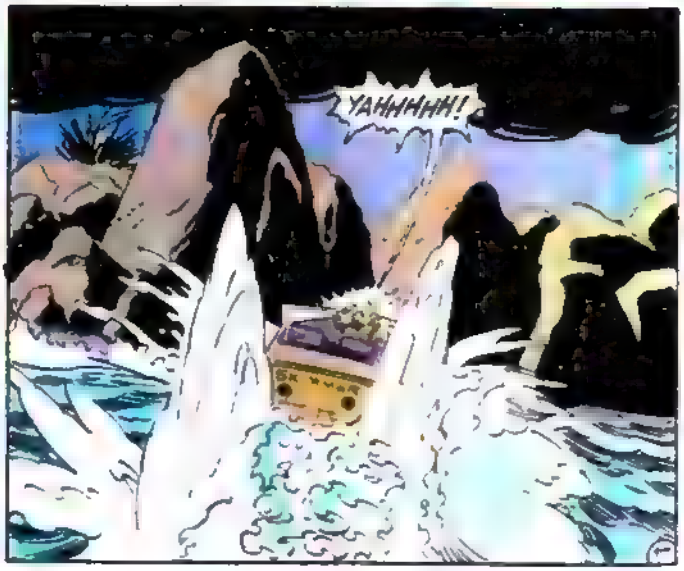
I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU EVENTUALLY. JUST DON'T WANDER. MIGHT MAKE IT HARD TO FIND YOU.

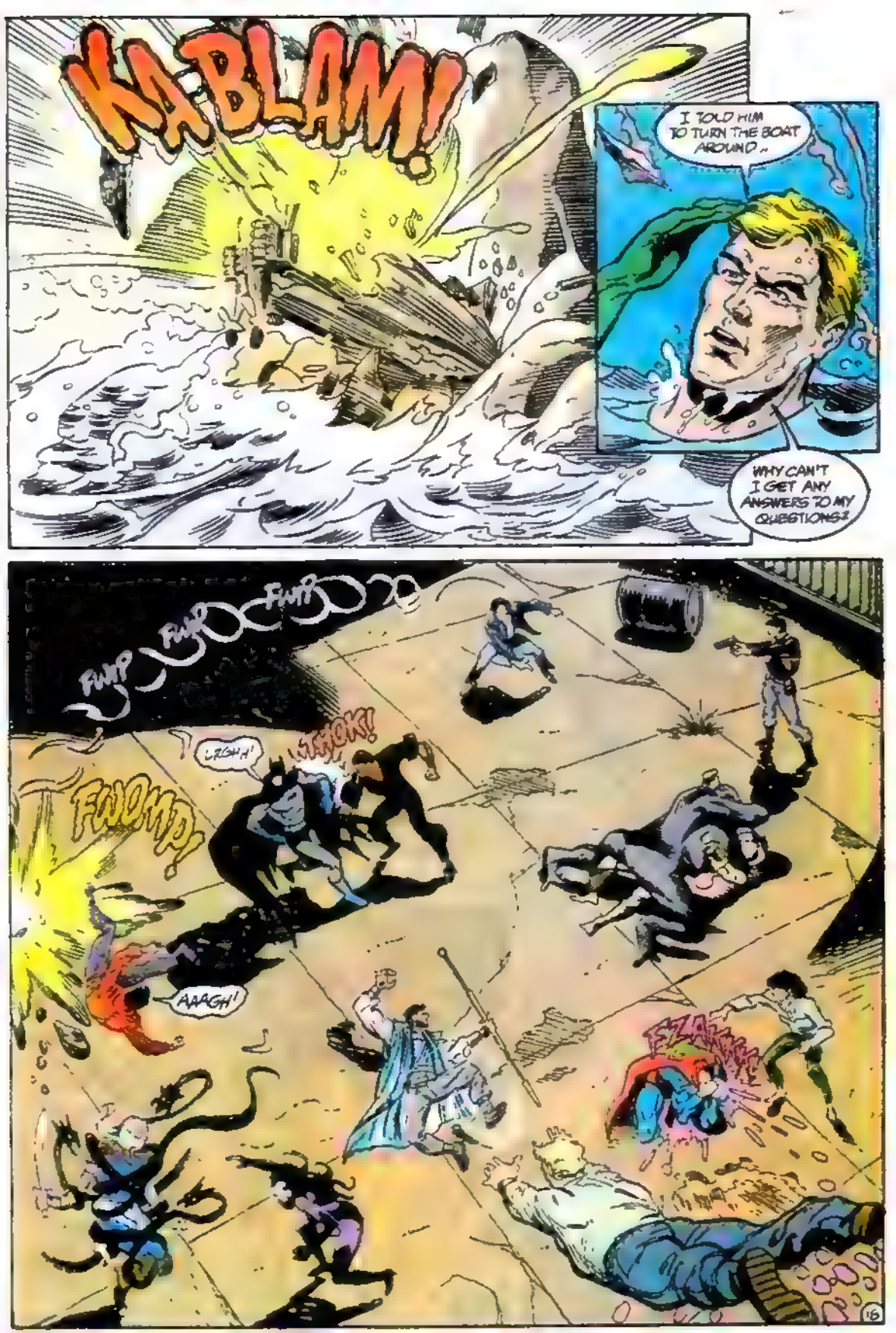
I'M SORRY, ADAM. IT ALL WENT WRONG
YOU DESERVE A BETTER RESTING PLACE THAN THIS.
C'MON, KID. I'LL GET YOU BACK WHERE YOU BELONG
ELSEWHERE
OUT OF MY WAY, BLAST YOU! ALL OF YOU!


TURN THIS BOAT AROUND--NOW GO BACK TO THE DOCK. I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU!
THIS IS NOT A REQUEST!
AND I AM NOT PLAYING GAMES!


BLAM BLAM!
SKYMMER


I WILL NOT BE--
OH NO!


YAHHHHH!


KABLAM!
I TOLD HIM TO TURN THE BOAT AROUND...
WHY CAN'T I GET ANY ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS?
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
URGH!
THOK!
FWOMP!
AAAGH!
FLANK!
16

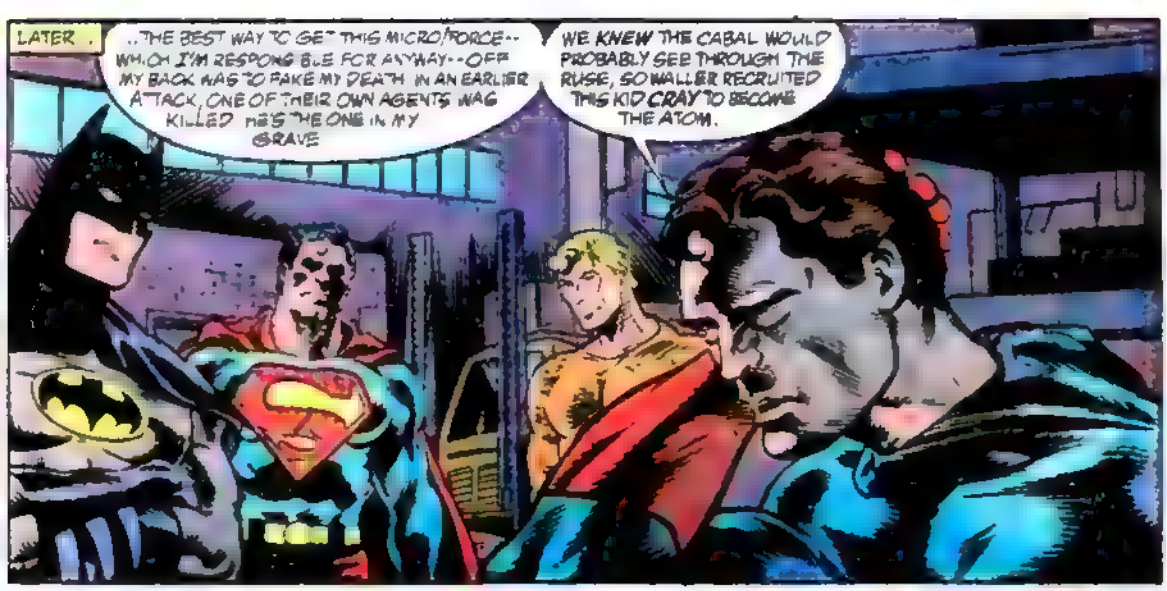
GET...OUT... OF... MY... MIND!
YU'LL FAIL! YU HAFTA FAIL!

NOT... TODAY! AND NOT... TO YOU!
WHADDDDDM!

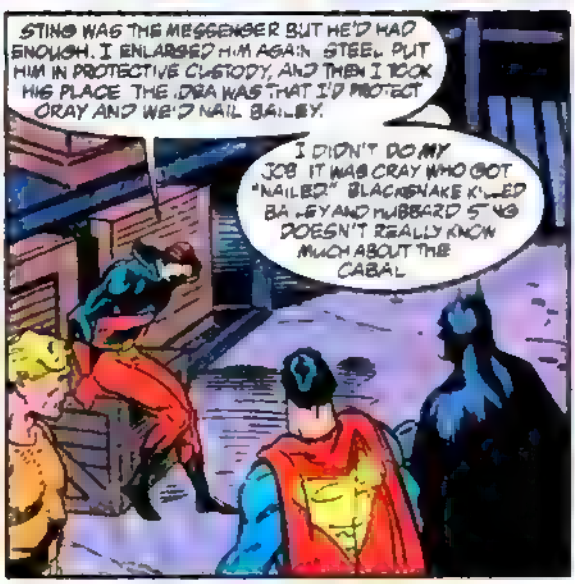
WHAT ARE YOU?! WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU TO MAKE YOU SUCH A VICIOUS LITTLE GIRL?

OKAY, I WANT TO KNOW WHERE MARLO IS, I WANT TO KNOW WHERE STEEL AND WALLER ARE, ESPECIALLY WALLER. I WANT TO KNOW IF RAY PALMER IS ALIVE OR DEAD--AND EITHER WAY, I WANT TO SEE HIM.

OR I'M GOING TO REALLY GET MAD.


LATER .
..THE BEST WAY TO GET THIS MICRO/FORCE-- WHICH I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYWAY--OFF MY BACK WAS TO FAKE MY DEATH IN AN EARLIER ATTACK, ONE OF THEIR OWN AGENTS WAS KILLED HE'S THE ONE IN MY GRAVE
WE KNEW THE CABAL WOULD PROBABLY SEE THROUGH THE RUSE, SO WALLER RECRUITED THIS KID CRAY TO BECOME THE ATOM.

A BIT OF LEGERDEMAIN-- YOU KNOW, SLEIGHT OF HAND, LIKE A STAGE MAGICIAN USES YOU WATCH THE HAND THAT'S BUSY WHILE THE OTHER HAND PERFORMS THE TRICK.
BUT I COULDN'T TURN UP ANYTHING ON EITHER THE CABAL OR THE MICRO/FORCE THEN THEY APPROACHED CAPTAIN BOOMERANG ABOUT SELLING OUT CRAY. THE KID HIMSELF SUGGESTED THE PLAN AS A TRAP. BAILEY WOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CABAL


STING WAS THE MESSENGER BUT HE'D HAD ENOUGH. I ENLARGED HIM AGAIN. STEEL PUT HIM IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, AND THEN I TOOK HIS PLACE. THE IDEA WAS THAT I'D PROTECT CRAY AND WE'D NAIL BAILEY.
I DIDN'T DO MY JOB. IT WAS CRAY WHO GOT "NAILED". BLACKSNAKE KILLED BAILEY AND HUBBARD SAYS DOESN'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE CABAL

RAY, WHY DON'T YOU COME TO ONE OF US WITH ALL THIS? WE COULD BE CLEARED ALL THIS UP WITH YOU
NO, I DON'T THINK SO. FOR THE MOST PART, WE FIGHT BEST AGAINST PEOPLE WHO WEAR BRIGHT COSTUMES AND TRY TO BLATANTLY SEIZE POWER. THESE GUYS ARE ALL SHADOWS AND SMOKE. BEST LEFT TO PEOPLE LIKE STEEL AND WALLER.

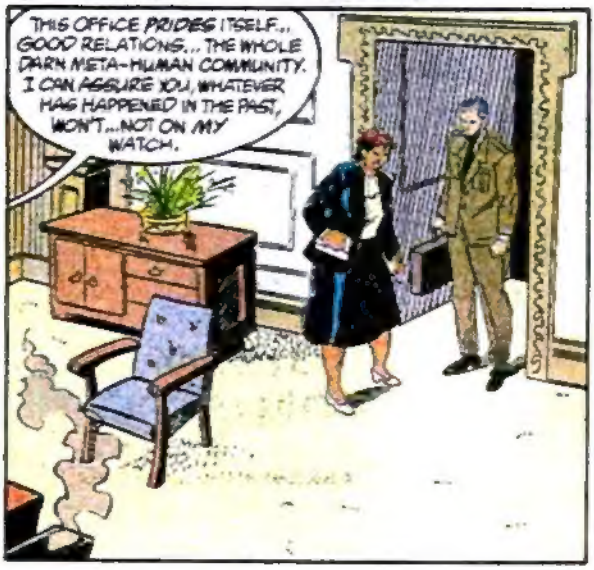
I MIGHT DISPUTE THAT WITH YOU PALMER, BUT I'M BRINGING UP ANOTHER QUESTION--WHERE ARE STEEL AND WALLER?

"THEY'RE MAKING A REPORT SOMEWHERE ELSE."
VERY INTERESTIN' REPORT, THIS HERE. WHO ELSE HAS SEEN IT?
FOOSH!
EYES ONLY
NO ONE, SIR. EYES ONLY, AS IT SAYS. AS YOU REQUESTED.
GOOD. GOOD.

BASICALLY GOOD JOB. STILL, YOU SHOULD'VE CONSULTED THIS OFFICE...

AS THE MEMO SAID, SIR, WE WEREN'T SURE JUST HOW FAR THE CABAL'S INFILTRATION WENT.
YOU SUGGESTIN' I PERSONALLY WAS INVOLVED?
NO. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN PROVE-- TO EITHER A COURT OF LAW OR THE MEDIA.

BUT I THINK I COULD CONVINCE RAY PALMER WITHOUT MUCH TROUBLE, AND HE CONVINCE A MAN WITH A BIG RED "S" ON HIS CHEST AND ANOTHER WITH A BAT ON HIS, AND A CERTAIN SEA-KING, TOO.
AND THEY IN TURN WOULD CONVINCE THE MAJORITY OF THEIR COLLEAGUES. AND I DON'T THINK YOU'D LIKE THAT ONE BIT.


THIS OFFICE PRIDES ITSELF... GOOD RELATIONS... THE WHOLE DARN META-HUMAN COMMUNITY. I CAN ASSURE YOU, WHATEVER HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST, WON'T...NOT ON MY WATCH.

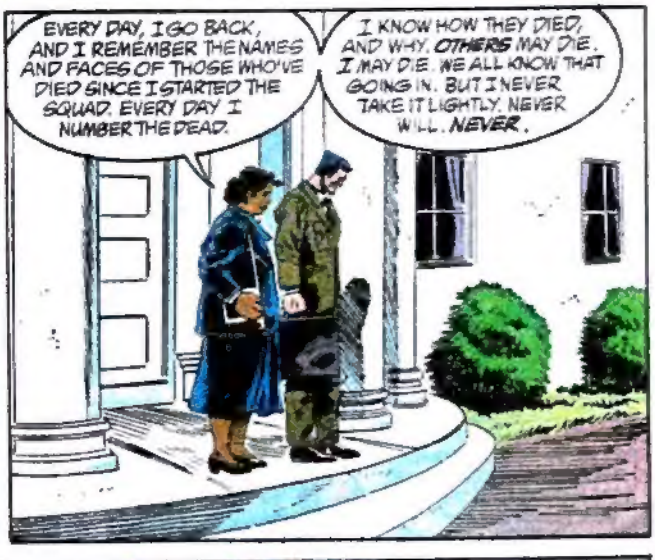
WELL, THAT'S JUST FINE. BECAUSE I GUARANTEE THAT IF I HEAR EVEN A WHISPER SUGGESTING ANYTHING ELSE, THEY WILL KNOW. WHETHER I'M ALIVE OR DEAD, THEY WILL KNOW.
JUST SO YOU UNDERSTAND.

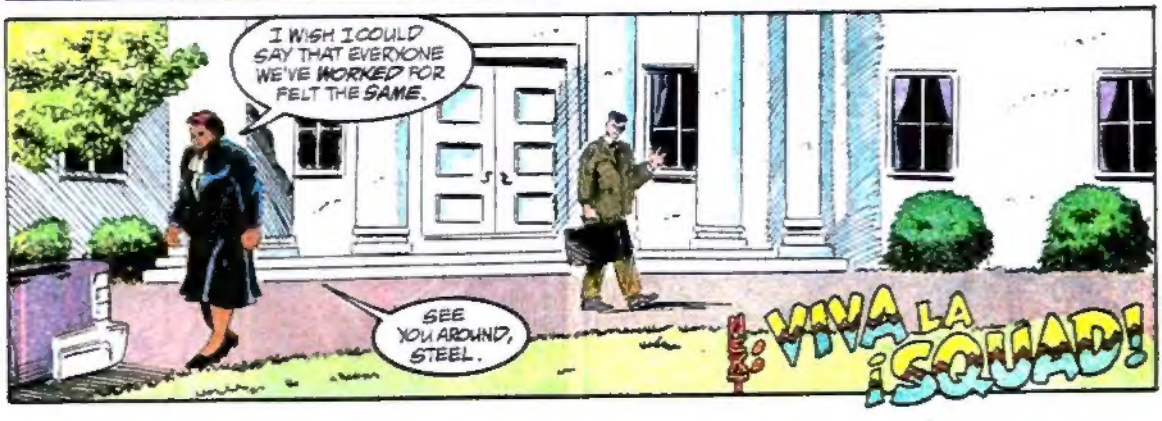
WELL, MAYBE THAT'LL DO IT. WOULDN'T BET THE RENT ON IT.
WHAT'RE PALMER'S PLANS NOW?

HE'S GOING TO STICK WITH US FOR A WHILE, MAYBE HELP US FIND ANOTHER REPLACEMENT, BEFORE HE GOES INTO RETIREMENT.
CRAY'S GETTING KILLED HAS REALLY GOTTEN TO HIM.

IT'S GOTTEN TO YOU, TOO, WALL.

YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET, STEEL? THEY ALL DO.


EVERY DAY, I GO BACK, AND I REMEMBER THE NAMES AND FACES OF THOSE WHO'VE DIED SINCE I STARTED THE SQUAD. EVERY DAY I NUMBER THE DEAD.
I KNOW HOW THEY DIED, AND WHY. OTHERS MAY DIE. I MAY DIE. WE ALL KNOW THAT GOING IN. BUT I NEVER TAKE IT LIGHTLY. NEVER WILL. NEVER.


I WISH I COULD SAY THAT EVERYONE WE'VE WORKED FOR FELT THE SAME.
SEE YOU AROUND, STEEL.
¡VIVA LA SQUAD!

SUICIDE NOTES

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Well, the mystery of the Atom is now solved. Since some readers still look at the letters pages before they read the story, I'll refrain from bean-spilling until your letters start coming in on this issue.

Boy, you sure hit the nail on the head in your Next Issue Box in SUICIDE SQUAD #59: "more action than you can fit into 22 pages." *The Mystery of The Atom* is my most anticipated storyline of the year, and it kills my soul to have to wait another month for its continuation, what with Part One being so darn good.

"Legerdemain" (yep, had to look that one up, folks) had key elements in it that I have been dying to see. The further state of the capture of dictator Marlo, carried over from the Superman titles was but one. The Vertigo/ Lawton, Lawton/Cray and Cray/ Boomerbutt thread running through your issues is another. The very heartstopping, long-awaited meeting between Batman and Barbara Gordon in her current state is yet another (man, I just knew that was him speaking on the bottom of page 16). For some reason, no writer in the Batman books has attempted this confrontation, and it's been a long time coming (since THE KILLING JOKE, actually). And of course, Ray Palmer's old pals checking into his death.

At last.

I was so worried that his death was totally written off, but I should have trusted John. He's a continuity buff, and I know the comics fan in him—as in me—couldn't let this tragedy lie still. It is so noble that these three especially—Batman, Aquaman and Superman—would head the investigation. What nostalgia! What tradition!

For a long time I've been rotting in the corner that said Adam Cray was really Ray Palmer, but recent events have turned me around completely. Now the question is, is Ray Palmer still alive? Batman's revelation to Barbara on page 18 about the grave suggests the negative, but who says that body didn't belong to one of those other guys running around with the two mites on page 10?

Ray Palmer has met with such tragedy, with his wife betraying him and all the other details depicted in SWORD OF THE ATOM. But it didn't start there, actually. When Steve Englehart was writing JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA in the 70's, he gave the Atom an inferiority complex that had him doubting his own worth. So it's been brewing for some time.

I never knew how much I enjoyed his presence until he was gone. I still think he's alive, and I'm dying to hear his explanation.

God! Thirty days! Sheesh!

Chris Khalaf
P.O. Box 925142
Houston, TX 77292-5142

Thanks for writing, Chris.

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

The big day has finally arrived—the search for Ray Palmer. Isn't it funny how it is going to take the Big Three themselves to get to the bottom of the mystery? You have to respect Waller for at least *that*. Even so, I hope the Wall has a plan to take care of the trio's investigations. If not, she may be the only one who would be able to thwart them—hence Ray's choice in helping to fake his death. Oh, I'm positive now that Ray is alive. I just can't wait to find out the reason behind this charade. Kim and John have me enthralled *again*, Dan. It's getting to be a habit.

Sir Jon Johnson
64 Indian Hill Avenue
Portland, CT 06480

Hey, Sir Jon. Ray Palmer is dead! He was killed when his apartment was destroyed by a bomb back in issue #44.

Ahh, I just wanted to say that one more time for old times' sake.

* * * * *

Dear Squaddies,

Another month, another excellent issue of SUICIDE SQUAD. SS #59 began what looked to be possibly the best plot since Apokolips. If you can deliver all that this issue promised...

The cover was obviously designed to attract new readers, and I was worried for a moment that too much of the issue inside might be taken up with irritating introductions to the characters. But no scorecards here! I hope some casual Super/Bat/Aqua-fans did pick up this issue, and I hope they liked what they saw. DC still needs to perfect its cross-marketing techniques, though; there should have been some sort of mention of this even in the Super-titles' text pages, no?

I liked too many things about this issue to list them all: John and Kim's writing was at its best—fast-paced, insightful without being pompous, filled with characterization—the usual, in fact, only more so. John seems to produce better work with Kim than when solo, or perhaps he works better with a large cast; whatever, SUICIDE SQUAD is still fresh, intriguing, and exciting after 59 issues of the same writer (about 35 with partner), and I can't think of many other titles I could say the same for. The art was also excellent; being barely able to draw stick-men myself, I never feel qualified to criticize art beyond saying that I like it. Sorry to the artists for not spending as much time singing their praises as I do the writers.

Some constructive criticism (I hope), and some things I especially enjoyed about #59:

The Captains of Industry: Either use them properly as guest stars somewhere, or make the decent characters join another group, or else forget them. Currently they just pop up for no real good reason and waste space.

Issue #58: Since distribution of WAR OF THE GODS and related titles would appear to be completely random, some information on what happened to the rich and varied supporting cast would have been appreciated. John Henry, for instance? And Silver Swan?

Batman and Oracle: Wonderful.

Deadshot and Boomerang and Cray: Also wonderful. I had no idea Harkness was such a nasty piece of work; like, I suspect, most characters in the book, I underestimated him.

The Jihad and Hayoth: The Jihad is fine as long as Rustam is still dead. The Hayoth I approve of—Ramban, especially.

The Micro/Force: I hope Waller will step on them.

"Chessmen Agenda": Oho, a conspiracy! I like it, corny though it sounds. This "Director" fellow—Kobra, by any chance? Or less sinister?

SUICIDE SQUAD: Nobody has died for a whole YEAR! Vixen has left, which is nearly as good. The New Thinker would not be missed. It looks like one of Lawton and Harkness will have to go. Ah, well, perhaps Punch and Jewelee will return to replace them.

And one last thing: Is Ben subconsciously trying to look like Raven did with that beard? The two seemed to share some psychological link.

Keep up the good work—I notice that #62 will be your fifth Anniversary (due to the bimonthly Janus Directive issues), so—double sized? Go on..

Tom Ewing
72 Kennel Lane
Fetcham, Surrey
England

Not much going on in the Captains of Industry department, Tom, but John Henry Martin appears in our next major storyline. As for Silver Swan, I guess she returned to wherever she came from. I haven't read the end of the crossover, so I can't be sure. If one of you would care to write in (just one of you, now—I don't want to read 20 of these) and explain what happened to our characters during WAR OF THE GODS, I'll gladly print your letter as an addendum; new readers will find it invaluable.

I'd like to take a couple of inches of column space here to discuss crossovers in general terms. Bearing in mind the perpetual suspension of disbelief required by all super-hero-oriented stories, I always wonder how aware the characters themselves are of the "greater cosmic forces" in the air during crossover months. Any hero who's been at it for more than a year has got to be able to recognize the signs, and to expect reality-warping happenings. Even Batman (as straightforward a character as you'll find prowling around the DC Universe) periodically gets caught up in a yearly mystical or technological whirlwind of continuity. So I'm thinking we should actually emphasize *this sort of thing.*

Because Red Skies or Gene-bomb effects aren't the only harbingers of impending crossover pyrotechnics...

"My god!" cries some innocent bystander in Gotham City. "We're really in for it now! I just heard the Outsiders got back together! Dark forces beyond human comprehension can't be far behind!"

"That's not all, I'm afraid," says his wife. "Firestorm is in town, and three members of Infinity, Inc. were seen with a couple of guys from Checkmate!"

"Gosh, honey, I hope we'll still exist when all this is over..."

Well, maybe not...

But I'm sure we'll perfect the art of the crossover one of these days.

Incidentally, folks, I recommend the SUPERMAN titles if you don't read them already. Even if they did *forget to plug the Superman appearance in SQUAD...*

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Aquaman! Batman! Superman! Wow! What an explosive way of starting "Legerdemain." And if that's not enough to satisfy some people, it looks like both the Hayoth and the Jihad are just around the corner. With all this going on, it's surprising that you managed to squeeze in the Squad also. I'm really glad that you mentioned that the new storyline is being stretched to four. As thrilled as I was about the "Dragon's Hoard," I felt that the conclusion was rushed. I was really looking forward to the rematch between Bronze Tiger and Catseye, and I have to say that I was disappointed with the results. I understand that you guys had to tie up all the other plotlines, but good, memorable fights (and scenes) take more than one page to settle. Please do not end "Legerdemain" in the rushed manner like you did with the "Dragon's Hoard." If you must, stretch the storyline to five. It looks like Captain Boomerang and Lawton will finally have a confrontation. Personally, I don't mind if they kill one another. It's about time other core members "lived up" to the Squad's reputation.

The reasons I want them to die are quite obvious. The Captain is getting to be very irritating, and besides, his powers (or should I say gimmicks) are stupid. Lawton is not as "cool" as he used to be since he dropped the name Deadshot. I don't care about Lawton's old costume, but I think every member should have a nickname. Even Amanda has "The Wall." I won't really mind if you kill off any other member of the group besides these two, as long as it's not a female member. With Vixen gone and Poison Ivy incapacitated, the only real female field operative left is Nightshade. One final request: In future storylines, I would like to see the Squad hired to go against other superpowered mercenary groups such as the Society of Sin, and criminal masterminds such as Ra's al Ghul and the Joker. Think about it.

Robert Hemedes
606 Alvarado Avenue
Apt #78
Davis, CA 95616

P.S. Is there any chance of seeing Cheshire, Deadline, Huntress, Lady Shiva, Punch and Jewelee, Speedy or the Terminator in future issues?

Deadline, huh? Well, I'll see what I can do...

Thanks for writing, Robert.

* * * * *

Mr. Raspler,

RE: SUICIDE SQUAD

Legerdemain—sleight of hand. It appears we may see plenty of trickery and deceit in this new storyline. The escape, or murder, of Marlo. The truth behind what happened to Ray Palmer. (Personally, I think John Ostrander has Ray trapped in a pill box in his medicine cabinet.) Count Vertigo's illness and the situation with his wife. Boomerang and Cray planning on taking out Lawton. All of these things have the potential to be exciting storylines, but I believe the most fascinating bit of this four-parter is the three big guest stars.

Superman, Batman, and Aquaman (my favorite) together again after years apart. Once they were the stalwarts of the Justice League, now they get to meet once again here in SUICIDE SQUAD. Don't get me wrong, I love the new League, but it's nice to see bits and pieces of the old every once in a while. I'm a relative newcomer to this book, but I feel that this is the perfect place to see these heroes together. Where else should they appear but in a book about their enemies. The irony is beautiful.

One final note: Please stop killing Firestorm villains. I loved John's work on Firestorm, but that doesn't give him the right to kill every villain from that book that he did not create. I also did not like the inclusion of "the Writer" in the last issue. Lastly, please do not attempt to include Kid Eternity in this comic. It would not work.

Besides those small gripes, I really enjoy the series and see great things in the future.

Good day,
Shaggie D. Matthews
3413 Killimore Court
Tallahassee, FL 32308

P.S. Please show more of the Captains of Industry.

There are no particular plans for the Captains, Shaggie.

THE NEXT ISSUE BOX DeLUXE: SUICIDE SQUAD #63 is a prologue of sorts to our next major storyline, and at the same time is a "beat" issue. We'll collect ourselves, catch up with some old friends, and prepare for the most important mission the Squad has ever started.

PLUS, you don't want to miss the new batch of DC villains working for parole: Shrapnel, Deadline, Blockbuster, Bolt, and Sudden Death!

Intrigued? Be here in 30 days!

—Dan Raspler
100% Natural